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DAN SMOOT

THE PREPOSTEROUS PEACE CORPS

On December 17, 1959, The Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress submitted to Congressman Henry S. Reuss (Wisconsin Democrat) a study, which the Congressman had requested, concerning the establishment of a Point 4 Youth Corps — a program of enlisting young Americans to go abroad as civilian government employees, to help people in "less developed countries."

On January 14, 1960, Reuss introduced a bill to provide for still another study "looking toward a possible Point 4 Youth Corps." Congress enacted the Reuss proposal, and the study "looking toward" a Youth Peace Corps was ordered. The job was farmed out to the Colorado State University Research Foundation.

On June 15, 1960, Hubert Humphrey (then Democrat Senator from Minnesota) got up in the Senate and praised the "vision and statesmanship" which Congressman Reuss had displayed in introducing the bill ordering a study "looking toward" a Youth Peace Corps. Humphrey said, however, that we should not wait for another study. He introduced a bill to create a Peace Corps at once.

Humphrey assured the Senate that his Peace Corps bill was an anti-communist measure. Young American college students and graduates would "assist the peoples of the underdeveloped areas of the world to learn the basic skills necessary to combat poverty, disease, illiteracy, and hunger." Then, poor people in those areas would no longer hate and envy us for our wealth, and would no longer turn to communism to be uplifted.

"And yet," Senator Humphrey said, "I want to make it very clear that the bill I am introducing is not meant primarily as an anti-communist measure." He explained this by labeling himself and others like him as men of "imagination and boldness" who have "elevating visions" of what the world and mankind ought to be, and who make "creative efforts" to establish heaven on earth.

Mr. Humphrey proposed that Peace Corpsmen be trained for a year before serving overseas.

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In one year, young college students (who, considering the kind of education generally dispensed in schools and colleges in these times, know practically nothing about the basic principles of their own society, or the real history of their own nation, or the reasons for its growth to greatness) would get a "thorough grounding in American public policy and contemporary thought," from "government officials, foreign lecturers, and members of the academic community" — that is, from the very people responsible for the contemporary widespread ignorance of Americanism. The young Peace Corpsmen would also learn all about the economic, social, cultural, and political complexities of ancient and primitive societies which do not understand themselves; and they would acquire fluent speaking knowledge of difficult foreign languages.[1]

All of this in one year! As Hubert Humphrey says of himself and his liberal friends: they do have visions.

The visions are, of course, selective: they overlook many facts.

Since 1948, we have spent millions of tax dollars on an "exchange program" which sends experienced professionals abroad to teach people in other lands, and brings foreign students and teachers here. We have spent hundreds of millions of tax dollars on "technical assistance programs" which are supposed to send real experts into underdeveloped areas to teach people how to do things for themselves. We have spent billions of tax dollars on economic aid to uplift backward nations. For generations, American businesses, charitable organizations, and churches have been giving all kinds of aid (technical, medical, and other) to people in backward countries.

Humphrey's vision of a Peace Corps did not encompass these facts, and did not reveal how a few thousand youths could be trained in one year to accomplish what all those other costly efforts, private and governmental, had failed to accomplish.

Humphrey's vision did not embrace the truth that well-fed but brainwashed "intellectuals," and not hungry peasants and workers, are always first to become communist revolutionaries. Nor did the vision take into account the fact that the Peace Corps scheme is unconstitutional, because nothing in the Constitution authorizes the federal government to spend tax money on such schemes.

Humphrey's Peace Corps bill of 1960 (which did not pass) provided that enlistment in the Peace Corps would be "considered as fulfilling peace-time military obligations."

In a campaign speech on November 2, 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy (running for the Presidency, against Vice President Richard M. Nixon) proposed a Peace Corps virtually identical with that outlined in Hubert Humphrey's bill. Candidate Nixon criticized Kennedy's proposal, not because it was unconstitutional and fundamentally absurd, but because it would make Peace Corps service a substitute for military service.[1] Thus, the political battle of 1960 was pitched not on the grounds of whether we should have a Corps, but on the grounds of *what kind* we should have.

In his State of the Union Message, January 30, 1961, President Kennedy mentioned the "reservoir of dedicated men and women" on our college campuses who were itching to fight for world peace, and said "this talent" could be mobilized through the formation of a Peace Corps.

On March 1, 1961, President Kennedy issued an executive order creating the Peace Corps, directing the Secretary of State to finance it out of foreign aid funds. On the same day, he sent a message to Congress, explaining that the Peace Corps he had set up was to operate on a "temporary pilot basis." He asked Congress for legislation to make the Peace Corps permanent.[1] Congress complied.

As created by Congress, the Peace Corps has a high-salaried, permanent administrative staff.

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The workers sent abroad to elevate the downtrodden are called volunteers. They are not required to be young college graduates, but most of them are. After a few months of training, they serve two years abroad in underdeveloped areas (of Asia, Africa, Latin America), where they are supposed to live the life of the people among whom they work, eat the same food, wear the same kind of clothing, share the same kind of living conditions. They get no salary — just a living allowance that is supposed to give them an income comparable to that of the poor people whom they serve. But they are credited with $75.00 a month, which is given to them in a lump sum after their two years of overseas service.

It was initially anticipated that the Peace Corps would cost American taxpayers about $10 million for its first year of operations. But Sargent Shriver (President Kennedy's brother-in-law, and first director of the Peace Corps) went to Capitol Hill and easily obtained a $30 million appropriation for the first year (1961). President Kennedy happily dubbed Shriver "the most effective lobbyist" in Washington.[2]

The Peace Corps budget grew steadily, soon reaching $100 million a year.

This year, President Nixon asked Congress to appropriate $98.8 million for the Peace Corps during fiscal 1971. On April 10, 1970, the Senate, by voice vote, authorized $90 million (S3430).[3] On June 4, the House, in the foreign aid appropriations bill (HR 17867), authorized $98.8 million, the full amount requested by the President.[4] Passage of a conference bill by both houses, agreeing on the exact amount to appropriate for the Peace Corps, will be a routine matter.

About two-thirds of all Peace Corps volunteers serve as teachers in underdeveloped countries, though few of them ever had prior experience or professional training. Because Peace Corpsmen receive small living allowances and no salary (except the $75.00-a-month bonus at the conclusion of a tour), the Peace Corps has been clamorously touted as an inexpensive way for idealistic Americans to bring light and learning to the dark corners of the earth. Yet, because of the large, expensive "professional" staff that runs the Peace Corps, it costs U. S. taxpayers about $10,000 a year to keep each volunteer in the field. That is almost twice as much as it costs us to send experienced professors overseas as teachers in the old exchange program — which is still in operation.[5]

Some Peace Corps volunteers have managed to help a few people in some underdeveloped countries; but the snobbery — disguised and propagandized as selfless idealism — of sending inexperienced youths from prosperous families on two-year slumming tours around the world was foredoomed to do much more harm than good.

Here are a few embarrassing examples of the impression made by American Peace Corps volunteers abroad:

—Mrs. Virginia Benitez-Lucuanan, Filipino columnist for *The Manila Chronicle*, complained that a group of U. S. Peace Corps youths, invited to an informal dinner, came in dirty clothes and sneakers. She said:

"The cotton shirt waists and faded slacks and short sleeved shirts were all right although they could have stood a little pressing and cleaning, but the rubber sneakers were a bit too much.

"Even in the remotest barrios (villages), people always dress neatly and always spruce for special events. Of course, it is a good idea not to dress expensively and elaborately, but a little cleaning up, brushing their hair and powdering of face is not incompatible with good international relations.

"And what is more, while the Peace Corps youngsters may think that they are dressing simply so as not to overawe the natives, the Filipino psychology is such that if strangers attend their parties obviously under-dressed they feel insulted. . . ."[6]

—Malawi's Premier delivered an ultimatum to U. S. Peace Corps workers in his country: "clean

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yourselves up or go home." The Premier, who dresses immaculately and feels that teachers should present an appearance of dignity, complained that U. S. Peace Corp teachers "dress for school in their traditional uniform of sweater, sandals, and jeans." He also said that U. S. Peace Corpsmen mix too freely with Africans at the village level, sleep in African huts, drink in African beer halls, live with African girls, and get themselves involved in local African politics.(7)

—J. Kasubi, a member of parliament in Tanzania, told the National Assembly that unkempt, sloppily-dressed U. S. Peace Corps workers were setting a bad example for Tanzanian children. Kasubi alleged that Peace Corps workers wear clothes so revealing of their anatomy as to be vulgar, grow long beards, appear drunk before their pupils, quarrel in bars and clubs.(8)

—Julius Kiano, education minister of Kenya, advised American female Peace Corps volunteers to drop politics and hemlines before taking up teaching in secondary schools. In warning against American miniskirts, Dr. Kiano said: "They should never be worn, especially when teaching boys. Minis might offend the African sense of morals."(9)

The Peace Corps (which has cost U. S. taxpayers about $700 million since 1961) is worse than preposterous. It is sinister. It is playing a key role in the new-left-communist revolution now entering the stage of terrorism in the United States.

Letters I have received from intelligent, well-informed subscribers traveling or living abroad uniformly report that our Peace Corpsmen are often objects of contempt in foreign lands — a conspicuous number of them being middle-class youngsters who have rebelled against all traditional U. S. standards of decency, cleanliness, morality. These hippie political activists who represent us abroad (and who return to participate in guerrilla warfare operations and mass public displays of obscenity here at home) did not surreptitiously infiltrate the Peace Corps or get into it by mistake: they were sought out and recruited by high officials of government.

NEXT WEEK: The Sinister Peace Corps

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FOOTNOTES

(1) "Youth Peace Corps," *Dan Smoot Report*, March 31, 1961

(2) *Time*, July 5, 1963

(3) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 17, 1970, p. 1007

(4) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, June 12, 1970, pp. 1522-23

(5) Senate Foreign Relations Committee, published Hearing, Jan. 23, 1963

(6) UPI, May 6, 1964

(7) *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), Dec. 12, 1965

(8) AP, June 17, 1967

(9) AP, Jan. 11, 1969

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